



# ARBALESTER

**HOME BREW**



A Fighter Subclass for  
Your 5e Campaign



## ARBALESTER

The crossbow, or arbalest, is a great equalizer on the field of battle, giving the common person the ability to do maximum damage, at range, with little training.

In the hands of a well-trained user, the weapon becomes a lethal game changer. This is the role of the Arbalester. Schooled in the quick and efficient use of the weapon, the Arbalester has the ability to turn the tide of battle while keeping a safe distance from the fray, laying down volley after volley of infantry- and cavalry-defeating fire as long as the Arbalesters can be defended.

On the medieval field of battle, the Arbalester was drilled to fire in unison with their contingent, typically guarded from cavalry by a company of pikemen, literally giving the advantage of Polearm Masters and Crossbow Experts on the same part of the battlefield at the same time for an army with their services.

Alone, the Arbalester is a different story. You may find a safe place from which to fire, but there won't always be a pikeman to the rescue when things go south. For that reason, you are usually equipped with a hand crossbow and a rapier or shortsword. As an Arbalester you are also typically well armored. Scale mail armor or at least a chainmail shirt are considered uniform over some padding.

It is also crucial to stay well equipped with bolts. A case of 20 (a score) goes by very quickly. For any outing, at least three cases are recommended, and you should always gather spent bolts after an encounter if you have the time.

**Note:** It is intended that a light crossbow be used for this subclass. The load time for a heavy crossbow is such that there is no way to ignore the loading property. They are reloaded using some sort of cranking device, windlass or cranequin. To be able to fire off a shot every 30 seconds (once every five turns) would be considered masterful. A light crossbow, while lacking the power, is much faster to reload, and can conceivably be fired multiple times in a turn in a fantasy setting.

### IMPROVED ACCURACY

At 3rd level, you gain a +2 bonus to hit when using light or hand crossbows.

### CROSSBOW EXPERT PLUS

At 3rd level, you are able to reload and fire your light or hand crossbow as your bonus action on every turn. You can also ignore the loading quality of your light or hand crossbow. You may only use a hand crossbow as your bonus attack if you are wielding a one-handed weapon in your primary hand. You do suffer disadvantage on attacks made against targets within five feet of you.

### DEADLY AIM

Starting at 7th level, you can make an aimed shot with a -5 penalty to hit, attempting to hit your target's vulnerable spots. A hit is treated as an automatic critical. If you roll a natural 20, the hit is treated as a double critical. If you have proficiency with the Intelligence (Nature) skill, you can add half your INT modifier, rounded down but a minimum of +1, to your to hit roll due to your knowledge of anatomy. When you make an aimed shot, that is your only action for that round.

### SUPPRESSING FIRE

Starting at 10th level, you can fire four, rushed and unaimed shots for your turn, each at -10 to hit, in an effort to draw the attention and concern of your target. They must make a DC

15 WIS saving throw or go prone to avoid the volley. This becomes five shots at -8 to hit at 15th level, and six shots at -6 to hit at 18th level. All of the shots must be aimed at the same target. Use of this ability is your full turn and takes the place of a bonus action.

### GREATER DEADLY AIM

Starting at 15th level, you may use your Deadly Aim ability twice per round instead of once. Those are your only actions for that round.

### SNIPER SKILL

Also at 15th level, you can attempt shots of incredible difficulty that do incredible damage on a hit. If a target is within 120 feet, you may attempt a headshot at disadvantage. A successful hit does 6d8 + your DEX modifier + your proficiency bonus in piercing damage. A shot of this type takes a turn to set up and it's the only action you can take on either turn. If your to hit rolls are both natural 20s, your damage is doubled.

### MASTER MARKSMAN

Starting at 18th level, you now have a +3 to hit when using a light or hand crossbow and score critical hits on natural rolls of 18-20. Your critical hits do triple damage if you have proficiency in the Intelligence (Nature) skill.

## CREDITS

All images created using Dall-E 3 text-to-image generator from OpenAI. All text and concept from Homebrew Heathen except some lines from Crossbow Expert Plus ability taken from "Crossbow Expert," *D&D Player's Handbook* p. 165, Wizard's of the Coast, 2014.

